THE
CATHOLIC RADICAL

"...to foster a society based on creed instead of greed." Peter Maurin

August/September 2021 ***Price: For whatever it's worth.***

Minnesota's Standing Rock

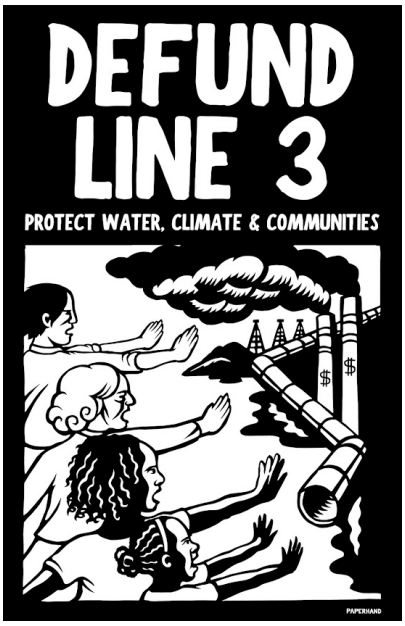
by Claire Schaeffer-Duffy

It was a bright day in early June when I boarded Amtrak's Lake Shore Limited bound for Chicago. From there, I caught the Empire Builder to St. Paul, Minnesota. Sleep at the hotel was short, but deep. I was packed and ready the next morning when Kat Nelson, a baker and mother of three, pulled up in her blue Kia. We were headed for Minnesota's North Country to participate in the Treaty Peoples Gathering, a mass, nonviolent protest of oil pipeline 3.

Owned by Canadian energy company Enbridge, Line 3 is part of a 6-pipeline corridor that crosses Northern Minnesota, daily transporting some 3 million gallons of tar sands oil from Alberta, Canada to a terminal in Superior, Wisconsin. The decades-old pipelines are showing signs of wear and tear, and Enbridge wants to build a replacement for Line 3 which is functioning at 50% capacity. The new route traverses 200 bodies of water, 800 acres of wetlands, and territories that are under treaty obligations with Minnesota's largest Indigenous group, the Anishinaabe.

The project has faced vigorous opposition ever since the energy company first proposed it in 2014. Public hearings dragged on for nearly two years with thousands of Minnesotans giving comment. Pipeline opponents included climate activists eager to end reliance on fossil fuels and tribes eager to protect their watersheds, wild rice tributaries, "the beautiful place we call home" from future oil spills. In 2017, Minnesota's Department of Commerce said it saw no need for the new line. Months later, an Administrative Law Judge recognized problems with the proposed route. Lawsuits have twice challenged the Public Utilities Commission's certification of the pipeline. Minnesota Governor Tim Walz opposed then conceded to the new line as an inevitability.

Indigenous women have been at the forefront of the struggle to stop Line 3. They have spoken out at public hearings, written articles, filed lawsuits, rallied at the



state capital, and established small prayer encampments near the line's construction sites. Among the most well-known is Ojibwe author and environmentalist Winona LaDuke who has worked for years on tribal land preservation and sustainable development. After the Public Utilities Commission gave its initial approval for Line 3, LaDuke, who lives in the North Country on the White Earth Reservation, took to her Facebook page.

"We will be out on this line, and we will stop this in the regulatory process, and we will stop this in the legal process, and we will stop this with our bodies," she said. "This is Minnesota's Standing Rock."

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Why Leave El Salvador for the US?

by Nely Ramirez

Editor's Note: The author is a member of La Carpa Catholic Worker community in El Salvador's capitol city, San Salvador. For more information or to receive the community's newsletter send an email to: erica.olson2@gmail.com.

To understand a little about this emigration phenomenon, we have to go back to the 1980's, when the Civil War broke out in El Salvador, and the attacks against the civilian population were increasing. There were only two options: stay and die at the hands of the military or emigrate to save your life. These events left a trail of suffering and poverty among the Salvadoran people which has worsened over time. Many of the people who fled, leaving their relatives in their country of origin, were favored in 1986 with the approval of the IRCA or Simpson-Rodino Law which allowed thousands of people who had arrived illegally, to legalize their status. This prompted a push towards family reunification. It was like a magnet which continues to exert its power over people who have a family member, friend, or acquaintance in the United States.

Throughout my life, I have seen various friends and neighbors leave with the vision of the "American dream," and it is like a chip implanted in their brains that blocks all vision and hope, keeping them from seeing the opportunities that exist around them or diminishing their courage to stay

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Minnesota

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The meeting site for the Treaty People's Gathering is Pure Bliss Ranch, a farm that has been converted into a camp and a venue for musical festivals. From Interstate 10, it's north on Highway 59 into the White Earth Reservation. Kat and I pass through lonely, big sky country, a landscape of farms, brush and the occasional cluster of deciduous trees. The drive takes us miles along an unpaved, dusty road so remote, we briefly wonder if we are lost.

Pure Bliss is abuzz with people and impressively organized. Throughout the afternoon, Kat and I listen to presentations on nonviolent direct action, the various roles for tomorrow's action, and the legal consequences of protesting a pipeline. Young, tattooed organizers, as zealous as any Pentecostal preacher, emphasize the importance of maintaining "a security culture." Stick with your affinity groups and designated roles, they say. The idea is to create an eco-system of solidarity. And do NOT talk to the cops!

At the art workshop, Luke Nephew of the Peace Poets and a Chicana woman with long black braids teach us songs for tomorrow's march. Music was fundamental in the struggle for civil rights. It bound total strangers together with a sense of purpose and provided a means of collective renewal under tough circumstances. So too here. After the first song, the Chicana woman asks for a prayer. An Indigenous man obliges, then the teaching and singing resume: *We are so blessed to be here/Standing for Indigenous rights*. People start to clap. A woman with short, white hair stretches her arms heavenward and waves them from side to side. The vibe is that of an ole-timey revival. Earnest. Urgent. We are a community of believers on a dusty hillside in Northern Minnesota.

Upwards to 2,000 Americans, people of every hue, age, and creed from all over the country, attend the Treaty Peoples Gathering. It's the biggest convergence to date in the multi-year fight against Line 3. On the morning of our action, several hundred people gather for a multi-faith prayer service near the headwaters of the Mississippi River, then join the procession along the highway to a bridge where people chalk a message to President Biden. An executive order from him could stop construction on Line 3. There is another prayer ceremony before a contingent of people, willing to risk arrest, head to the riverbank for an action at an Enbridge drill site. No one is arrested, but our actions stop pipeline construction on that day.

Elsewhere, local authorities arrest two hundred protestors who block an access road to an Enbridge pump station using debris from the woods and an old fishing boat named *Good Trouble*. Some people bolt themselves to construction equipment or each other. Among those locked down is a great grandmother of eleven grandchildren. "We had a chance to live," she says to a young documentarian, "What right do we have to take that from the children?"

The oil industry has long argued pipelines have a smaller carbon footprint and are less dangerous than shipping crude through towns and cities via trucks and trains. Enbridge says its upgrade is greener than pumping oil through an ageing, leaky pipeline. (The company is responsible for the biggest inland oil leak in the US.) A 2020 report, published by more than a dozen environmental organizations, found the Line 3 expansion represented "a giant step backward" in Minnesota's efforts to mitigate climate change. Its greenhouse emissions would exceed the state's 2016 total. Expanding Line 3 would also have the equivalent impact on the climate of 50 new coal-fired power plants and 38 million additional gasoline vehicles, the report said.

What right, indeed, do we have to sabotage the children's future?

Years ago, a friend told me about the praying grandmothers of Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North Dakota, how they offered prayers every morning at the river amid a bitter and valiant struggle against the Dakota Access Pipeline. I had wanted to stand with those women as Dorothy Day stood with Cesar Chavez and the migrant farm workers struggling for humane treatment. Out of solidarity and profound gratitude.

A grandmother myself, I know water's value. Without it, plants and babies, wither and die. Contaminate it, and the world grows sick. Water *is* life. I thank God for all the Americans fighting so hard to protect our rivers, watersheds and wetlands.

More than 500 activists have been arrested protesting Line 3 which is more than 60% complete. LaDuke and others are asking people to come to the North Country to join their nonviolent campaign. Ω

Editor's Note: To learn more about the campaign to Stop Line 3, visit: www.stopline3.org

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Read This Book!

by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

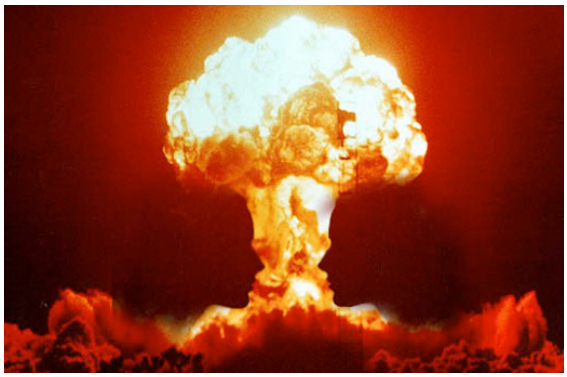
Thomas F. Lee's new book, **The Warning: A Novel for the Nuclear Age,** struck me as one of the most important I have ever read. It alternates between a fictional story about a Catholic priest in Manchester, New Hampshire and information about nuclear weapons. It explains how they were created, used, and could be used. With clarity and without left-wing rhetoric, Lee demonstrates the urgency of nuclear disarmament.

The main character is an affable Benedictine monk who teaches poetry. His academic peers at the college hold diverse political perspectives which are sympathetically presented. The monk faces a crisis of conscience when two Sisters of Mercy invite him to attend an anti-nuclear demonstration at a nearby Raytheon plant.

After each chapter, Lee uses a different typeset to document the history, destructive force, risk, and cost of nuclear weapons. One section about the atomic bombings in Japan also includes chilling details about indiscriminate and massive fire-bombing of Japanese cities. Another section describes numerous "broken arrows," technological breakdowns or mistakes that nearly led to nuclear war. With up-to-date precision, Lee summarizes the history of various nuclear arms control treaties and shows most have been abandoned by the United States and other nations. He cites Marshall Billingslea, the US arms control envoy, who said in September 2020, "We will be extremely happy to continue... without the START [nuclear arms control] restrictions... We know how to spend the adversary into oblivion." Lee's statistics argue for themselves that humanity cannot survive economically or physically a renewed nuclear arms race.

In discussions with combat veterans, the monk wrestles with the Just War Theory and concludes that indiscriminate killing can never be considered a "proportional" response to an adversary. The Hebrew scripture, New Testament, papal statements, the rule of Saint Benedict, and personal prayer all weigh heavily on the monk's conscience. In the book, conservative Catholics echo dissident bishops while ignoring Pope Francis' simple statement on nuclear weapons: "...the threat of their use, as well as their very possession, is to be firmly condemned." Lee makes it clear that most Catholics have never heard a single homily on the Church's support for nuclear disarmament. The race to annihilate all of God's creation advances without a peep from the pulpit.

Avoiding cardboard cutout characters,



Lee presents alternative views keenly. Nonetheless, the plea of a Sister of Mercy, "The real and present evil of nuclear weapons literally poised to envelop humanity in a living hell has to be resisted," rings true.

The book is not an anti-Republican diatribe. Lee makes it clear that Democrats and Republicans regard "massive military spending as a sacrosanct expenditure." He describes this spending in context of urgent and un-met human needs.

Lee quotes several members of the Kings Bay Plowshares 7, a group of mostly Catholic Workers who protested the world's largest nuclear weapons carrier, the Trident submarine, in Georgia. Clare Grady, of the Ithaca, New York Catholic Worker, says, "We cannot build, possess, maintain, and threaten the use of nuclear weapons and love God."

In the 1980s and 90s, I was arrested many times against nuclear weapons, but have succumbed to the notion that the threat of nuclear war has diminished. This book burst that bubble. While the climate emergency can wipe out humanity in thirty years, nuclear weapons can wipe us out in thirty seconds.

The following letter in the 6/15/21 *NY Times* underscores Lee's premise. Ω

The courageous disclosure by Daniel Ellsberg of the dangerous 1958 U.S.-China flash point over Taiwan provides a vivid warning of how easily we can precipitate a nuclear Armageddon by pursuing our strategy of heightened confrontation with China throughout the Pacific region.

Congress needs to oppose plans to greatly expand our military budget, including modernizing our deadly and overflowing stockpile of conventional and nuclear weapons. Those expenditures, a down payment for a new Cold War, move us further from the global collaboration needed to solve our climate and other planetary emergencies evinced by the Covid pandemic.

Hopefully, learning from this grim historical revelation, our representatives should mobilize immediately to support the No First Use Act (H.R.2603), introduced by Representative Adam Smith, to help avoid future predictable close calls involving nuclear weapons.

This would provide an opening for the United States and other nuclear-weapons states to move speedily to ratify the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which would do much to end the daily, too-invisible threat to our very existence.

Robert Gould
President of the San Franciso chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility

Free copies of Tom Lee's book are available via theresecw2@gmail.com or for purchase on Amazon. All proceeds go to Doctors Without Borders.

Why leave?

(Continued from Page 1)

to fight in their place of origin with their family and friends. Absolutely everyone has the right to a decent life, access to health, education, and the opportunity to realize our dreams. The questions are: what is the price to pay and how long will it take to achieve those dreams? Without a doubt, the fastest option is to emigrate, regardless of whether it is illegal, and despite the risks that lie along the way. The United States of America continues to be the first option to achieve a full and dignified life.

The departure of one of my childhood friends comes to mind. We studied together from elementary school through high school. He worked with the municipal government for a while, but as with any change in the administration, there are layoffs. He never again found a satisfactory and dignified job. I remember that he was presented with some offers to work in accounting, which is what he had a degree in, but he always claimed that he was paid little and that it was a heavy workload (and he was right, as I am an accountant!).

So the opportunities came and went, and he did not take any, until one day, he said that he would leave for the United States. His younger sister had migrated a couple of years before and said she would help him with part of the money. In order to come up with the rest to pay the "coyote," he re-mortgaged his house, which his family could not really afford, so the bank seized his little piece of land along with his house in El Salvador. Thankfully, he was able to find work and become more stable economically in the US. A few years later was able to pay for the passage of his wife and his two children. I know that he obtained a permit to work but not his residence. Was it worth all the sacrifice and effort? I suppose that each person is the protagonist of his or her own story, and there are so many stories to tell.

It is difficult to establish the causes that motivate migration, especially in a country lacking in resources and opportunities and full of social and economic problems that do not allow the full development of its inhabitants. There are sufficient reasons to dream of a different life, perhaps such as what we see in the movies. And here I make a parenthesis, to offer my conjecture that the missing piece to complete the puzzle is the lack of identity of a people that throughout history has been aggrieved and pushed to become a vassal of external cultures, coupled with the crisis of violence and unemployment. All together, it seems to be the perfect formula to flee in terror and never return. I am afraid that we will continue like this for much longer until the love for the land, for family, and a rediscovery of our history lead us to build a more just society and to work to make the necessary changes in order to bequeath to the future generations a dignified life and a horizon with glimpses of hope. The challenge we have as Catholic Workers is great, and we ask that you keep us present in your prayers that we may contribute our grain of salt to this society. Ω

Salvadorans want a better life for their children

1948 Gravediggers Strike

Editor's Note: The following is an excerpt from **Dorothy Day: Dissenting Voice of the American Century**, *by John Lougherty and Blythe Randolph.*

In December 1948, the 240 grave diggers of Calvary Cemetery in Queens, members of the Local 193 of the International Food, Tobacco, and Agricultural Workers Union, went out on strike against their employers, the trustees of Saint Patrick's Cathedral, who included, of course, Cardinal Spellman.... The men worked hard, a six-day week for $59.40 a week, and their principal demand was to work a five-day week for the same salary with overtime a part of their new contract.... The trustees said... that was out of the question.. As their paychecks stopped, some of the men came to the Catholic Worker looking for counsel, support, and, for the more financially strapped, food. Catholic Workers.... joined their picket line, and attended strike relief committee meetings.

...Spellman ...refused to meet with the striking grave diggers.... He made it clear that there was nothing to negotiate, and if the men did not return to work by the end of January, he would break the strike. A month later, with more than a thousand coffins piled up at the cemetery,... the cardinal called in seminarians from Yonkers, a few of whom were sons of the men out on strike, and told them to cross the picket lines and dig the graves. He was on hand to be photographed as that took place. Within days, the nervous men returned to work with little to show for their efforts...

In a letter to Cardinal Spellman before the strike ended, Dorothy Day beseeched him to remember that the strikers were asking not only for increased wages and improved working conditions but for "their dignity as workers, and the right to have a union of their own, and a right to talk over their grievances." ...She ladled out the praise, hoping that as "the outstanding Cardinal of the Church in America, a diplomat, a confidant and advisor to Pope and President... ," he would consider their appeal and at least agree to speak with them. "I do beg you so with all my heart to go to them..." There was no response."Ω

Palestinian War Crimes

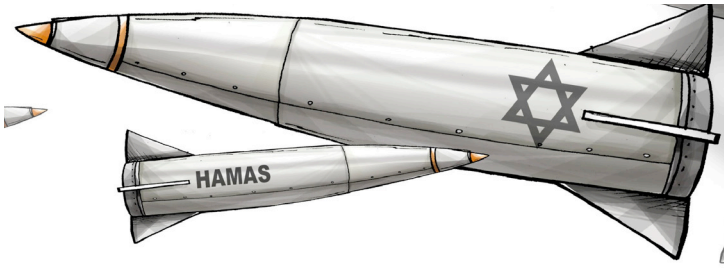
by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

In the 1949 Geneva Convention, The United Nations defined intentional attacks on civilians as a war crime. This spring, Palestinians in Gaza fired thousands of rockets into Israel. The fact that Israel intercepted many of these imprecise rockets that killed 14 people does not diminish their unlawfulness.

In June 2009 as a member of a Catholic Worker Peace Team, I visited Sderot, an Israeli town on Gaza's border. Earlier that spring, up to 30 rockets a day landed in Sderot. We saw several damaged homes and a playground with a bomb shelter in its center. Sirens provided civilians only 15 seconds warning before rockets struck.

At that time, American peace activists tended to focus on the far greater casualties of Palestinians, but, on July 2, 2009, Amnesty International accused *both* Israel and Palestinians of war crimes, the first for "unprecedented" attacks and the second for "indiscriminate" rocket attacks on civilians. The fact that Israel kills up to 100 times as many civilians as Hamas is not because Hamas is more nonviolent. There's no indication that Hamas would be disappointed if their rockets killed thousands.

Some activists see Hamas' missile strikes as the justifiable resistance of a severely oppressed people. A similar claim is made in the Israeli-occupied West Bank by



Palestinians who throw stones at Israeli soldiers and Jewish settlers. Although it is true that Hamas' rockets and Palestinian stone throwing are less destructive than the Israeli army's weaponry, both actions can be considered criminal.

From the Israeli point of view, Palestinians represent a constant threat to civilian life. As part of an earlier Catholic Worker Peace Team, we passed a Sbarro pizza parlor in West Jerusalem where a Palestinian suicide bomber killed himself and more than a dozen men, women, and children the next day. Such acts must stop, but increasing restrictions on Palestinians, walling them out, crushing them economically, demolishing their homes, seizing their farmland and water, imprisoning them without charge, shooting them, and bombing them only deepens Palestinian antipathy and recourse to violence.

The "Iron Fist" approach to the Palestinians favored by right-wing Israeli politicians has, at best, provided Israel respites from attacks. By the same token, neither rockets nor stones have changed Israeli hearts or minds either. It is long overdue for both sides to embrace methods that actually make the killing of children on either side less likely.

I strongly support equal rights for Jews, Christians, and Muslims to live side by side in a region sacred to them all. I fear that the current devotion to violence only hastens the day when one party acquires the means to exterminate the other. That would be a tremendous religious, cultural, and human disaster.

South African whites gave up apartheid, accepted democracy, and avoided vengeance from blacks. Deep and bitter wounds can heal. Knowledge of how each side has suffered can eclipse myopic histories. Ethnic and religious states need to reconstitute themselves into societies in which every resident enjoys the same rights. That goes for Israel, Saudi Arabia, China, Myanmar, and everywhere else. Such transformation can be understood, not as capitulation, but as victory. After all, peaceful coexistence between Palestinians and Zionists is in everyone's interest. Ω

The Man Underground

by Diane Estelle Imhoff

"The world will be saved by beauty."
Fyodor Dostoyevsky

In the end
it will not be
what you have done
but staring at
the jade tree that will
keep you sane.

In the end
the man underground Missouri
will not turn that key
because some memory
of his child
crashing through
piles of leaves
will not let him.

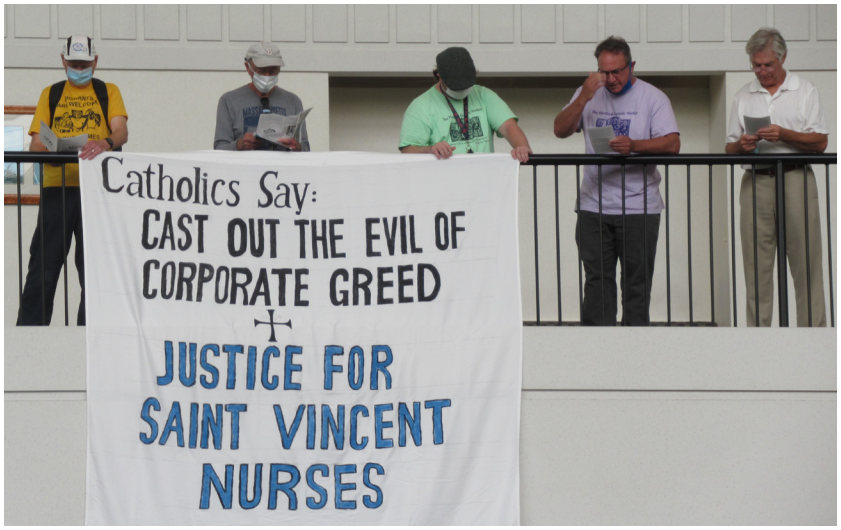
In the end
those impatiens
you planted in May,
that hummingbird
above your head,
this cool autumn breeze
will save us. Ω

Editor's Note: A friend, mother, peace activist, and poet, the author passed away in 2020. This poem appears in her book **Whispers Turned Shrill.**

Exorcism at St. Vincent's

On the 107th day of the second longest nurses' strike in Massachusetts history, Ammon Allen-Douçot, Chris Douçot, Al Guilmette, Frank Kartheiser, and Scott Schaeffer-Duffy, all affiliated with the Catholic Worker, prayed the Catholic rite of exorcism to cast out greed from the for-profit corporation that runs Worcester's Saint Vincent Hospital. After almost two years without a contract, the Saint Vincent nurses went on strike primarily over staffing levels for patient care. Texas-based Tenet Corporation, which earned record profits this year, is determined to break the union.

Douçot opened the prayer, "God, Creator and defender of the human race, who made us in your own image, look down in pity on these your servants, the executives of Tenet Corporation, now in



the coils of the unclean spirit of corporate greed and disdain for safe conditions for the nurses and patients of this hospital... Repel, O Lord, the devil's power over these executives, break asunder his snares and traps, put the unholy tempter to flight...."

Schaeffer-Duffy prayed, "...We adjure you, ancient serpent of corporate greed, by the judge of the living and the dead, by the Creator of the whole universe, by Him who has the power to consign you to hell, to depart forthwith in fear, along with your savage minions, from the executives of Tenet Corporation.... May the trembling that afflicts the striking nurses of this hospital, the fear that afflicts those images of God, be lifted. Make no delay in departing from this hospital...."

When asked by the press why they felt it was necessary to go inside the hospital, Scott Schaeffer-Duffy recalled a trial for a prayer on the property of a nuclear weapons plant. "The prosecutor asked a minister who testified for us, 'Isn't prayer just as effective off the property as on?' to which Rev. Steve Harvester replied, "No, in my pastoral experience, prayer is more efficacious in proximity to the sick."

Chris Douçot said, "Healthcare should not be something that's futures-traded on Wall Street for corporate profit."

Frank Kartheiser said, "It you want to know what's important for patients, you talk to nurses. You can trust nurses, they know what's good for patients."

A day later, the hospital emailed notices banning the "exorcists" and all members and affiliates of the Catholic Worker Movement from the hospital. A hospital spokesperson told the press, "These fringe activists do not speak for the Catholic leaders we rely on for spiritual guidance."

In reply, Douçot, Kartheiser, and Schaeffer-Duffy said, "We know of no pope, bishop, saint, or segment of the Bible that endorses making profit from serving the sick." Ω

Letters

Editor's Note: The following is a copy of a letter sent on May 17, 2021 by the authors to the Internal Revenue Service. They are two of many Americans who refuse to pay for war.

Dear Friends at the IRS,

We are Quakers and cannot in conscience pay for the killing of other human beings, or pay for war and preparations for war. Human life is too precious to drop bombs on people because we do not like their governments. Developing a new generation of nuclear weapons which could put an end to life on our beautiful planet is immoral and insane. Giving the Pentagon hundreds of billions of dollars does not increase the security of our people when we are cutting funds for schools, libraries, job training, and diplomacy work at the State Department.

The wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen, and elsewhere, as well as increased use of drones have NOT increased our security, but rather have created more enemies of the United States. Our tax dollars are also being used to prepare for wars with Russia, Iran, North Korea, and China which could easily, by accident or intention, become a nuclear war which could kill billions of people. Let's end the "war on terror" and all wars and bring our tax dollars home to meet the needs of the American people.

Fifty-three percent of everyone's tax dollars go for wars and preparations for wars. Together with our IRS form, we are

sending a check for 47% of what we owe made out to the Department of Health and Human Services. We ask you to designate all those funds for health, education, and human well-being — and NONE for war and killing. The other 52% which goes for war and killing we are contributing to organizations working for peace and justice, and programs meeting human and environmental needs in the US and around the world.

Instead of paying for war and killing, we are joining together with others to build what Martin Luther King Jr called the "Beloved Community." We hope and pray that all the taxes from people worldwide can go to schools, good health care, and housing for all people on earth which will help create a healthy planet for our children and all future generations.

Sincerely,

David & Janet Hartsough
San Francisco, California

Hi, Guys,

Thanks for the *Radical*. I loved the article about gender. I have a relative who has recently grappled with a whole range of issues. Gender identity is one of them. I am so proud of him for standing up for himself at school. My issues while I was at school were different ones, but I know I was too gutless to challenge the status quo. So anyone ready to face the crowds for standing up and being true to themselves... at whatever age but especially while young...gets my admiration. I loved the gentleness of your article too.

I loved your Mason Street Musings too. Good on that fellow drawing your portraits. And good on you guys for extracting a positive message from his act.

We have not been in lockdown in Aotearoa for a very long time, so have been free to practice our cultural ceremonies all of this year and a fair bit of last year. The borders were closed though to people or their dead being brought back from overseas, hence why we had fewer *tangi* [a Maori funeral rite].

So, life goes on over here very similarly to before covid except for higher prices for everything and no overseas holidays or tourists. We have to remind ourselves how devastatingly different it has been for the rest of the world.

What Sheri calls "Our home above the clouds" in New Zealand

We have just finished an inter-tribal meeting. The region's council is setting up a new bylaw which will effectively give then authority on any land with native trees on it. In essence, most of this is Maori land. While protecting native vegetation is a very important priority, the whole way this has been done smells strongly of colonization taking autonomy from indigenous people yet again. In our sub-tribe, we have our own people who manage invasive pests etc. This would be true of most other sub-tribes also. The council tried to sneak this through without consultation with the traditional custodians.

We're now on our way to another *marae* [the courtyard of a Maori meeting house] in another tribe's area, to celebrate a granddaughter's birthday. Busy busy.

Sheri Ellery Waata
New Zealand

Karen Perrins

Catholic Worker Calender

August 3 - Vigil for Nuclear Disarmament: Join us near the 76th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, to call for the adoption of the UN Treaty to Ban Nuclear Weapons. 3:30-4:30 PM, Lincoln Square, Worcester.

August 14 - Vigil of Catholics for Saint Vincent Nurses- If the strike is not settled, join us in support of nurses. Saint Vincent Hospital's Summer Street entrance, 11-Noon. Please email theresecw2@gmail to have your name included in our flyer.

August 11 & 25, September 15 & 29 - Evening Prayer: Join us for prayer & Taize chant. 52 Mason Street. Refreshments to follow. 7 PM

September 8 - Line 3 Pipeline Protest: Come hear a presentation about Claire Schaeffer-Duffy's participation in June protests against the tar sands oil pipeline in Minnesota. 7 PM, 52 Mason Street, refreshments to follow.

September 14 - Vigil to End Military Training at Holy Cross: Join us on the Feast of the Holy Cross for our annual appeal for the removal of ROTC on the campus of this Catholic college. 11:30-12:30, on the steps of Dinand Library.

Mason Street Musings

More than 80 years ago, Peter Maurin, the co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement, wrote: "It is in fact impossible for any culture to be sound and healthy without a proper regard for the soil, no matter how many urban dwellers think that their food comes from groceries and delicatessens or their milk from tin cans."

He believed that the hardships of industrialization could be mitigated by a back-to-the-land "Green Revolution." Long before we understood the environmental harm wrought by mining, pesticides, and pollution, Maurin realized the wholesomeness of farming.

In 1986, with less than forty square feet of grass sandwiched in the shade between our house and our neighbor, our gardening prospects didn't look promising. We did enjoy a fruitful relationship with the Noonday Catholic Worker Farm in Winchendon, though, and regular donations from the farm at Saint Joseph's Abbey in Spencer. But, aside from

Mary Azarian

window boxes and a flower garden in an abandoned lot, our gardening was slight, until the house behind ours burned down, was demolished, and the owner gave us permission to use the vacant lot.

Since then, Claire, Dave Maciewski, Brenna Cussen, Joel Betts, and others have turned half that space into a vibrant garden. Last night, we enjoyed fresh greens and sweet peas in their pods. Our guest from India, rejoices each year when we harvest hot peppers for weeks on end. I love the cherry tomatoes and seemingly endless supply of kale, which we pick and see grow back again. Abundant mint leaves transform ice tea into something ethereal. Fresh basil leaves elevate Italian food and salads too. A wealth of garlic is drying on our back porch right now. Our only disappointment was the pilfering of strawberries by hungry critters despite our best efforts to protect the plants. Claire rescued only one of the red fruit which she generously gave to me. It was scrumptuous!

When I sit at my computer, I am blessed to look to my left out the window at the lush garden, surrounded by flowers, adjacent to an crab apple tree we planted some years ago. In a world with so many problems, so much pain and suffering, the simple beauty of a garden cannot be underestimated.

In recent years, large numbers of young people drawn to the Catholic Worker have become farmers. Unlike early Catholic Workers, who often had no idea how to run a farm, these young people work the land with vigor and wisdom. Far from stealing them away from human needs, their devotion to the earth often invigorates their activism against fossil fuels, war, and poverty. If more of us take up a trowel and hoe, the worst aspects of climate change can be avoided.

In honor of his departed sister, Father Steve Josoma, donated a wooden bench and planted the gorgeous flowers outside our garden which bloom year after year. Our recent sing along in the yard benefited from the bench and many plantings. It's easy to look out and say, "God is good."

As summer moves to fall, I pray that all of us can draw strength from the harvest to witness to God's love in every way we possibly can. Thank you all for your fertile support and kindness. Ω **Scott**

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